

I A S T E.

A

S A T I R E.

IN

An EPISTLE to a FRIEND.

*Here you will find, if you'll be pleas'd to read,
None but the Vicious in my Verses bleed:
Neighbour or Stranger, Friend or Foe's alike,
Not at the Man, but at the Vice I strike.*

Seasonable Reproof of *Anon.*

Qui Capit, ille Facit.



L O N D O N:

10-10-10

T A S T E.

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YES, G----n! when once *Virtue* quits the Earth,
TASTE is a Monster of Hydræan Birth.
If foul *Corruption*, wing'd with putrid Stains,
Would taint with secret Poison Honour's Veins,
If *Vice*, with all its Fevers, would enflame,
TASTE gives them Passport thro' the Gates of Fame :
So GEORGE's Image stamps a current Coin
On Copper, worthless in th' unpolish'd Mine.
Old Age, with every Ill and Curse oppress'd,
Feels second Infancy resume its Breast ;
Renews its Cradle, Dreams, and childish Toys,
Mimics past Scenes, and swells with fancied Joys ;
Women to Lewdness and Reproach incline ;
The *Priest* turns Poet ; the *Buffoon* Divine ;
The *new-fledg'd Courtier*, on whose Patriot Tongue
Angels, with charm'd Attention, might have hung,
Now damns that public Spirit which he prais'd,
And levels with the Ground the Pile he rais'd.
Say, whence this *Impar sibi* in Mankind ?
Whence, but from TASTE too viciously inclin'd ?

There *Messalina* no gay Wish denies,
And smiling Nature throws off each Disguise ;
No Family-concern her Thoughts invades,
Immers'd in *Routs*, *Intrigues*, and *Masquerades* ;
While her fond patient L-----d still couchant lies,
And, meanly prostrate, courts insulting Vice :

Beauty that surfeits ; Wit that would offend ;
 A harmless Enemy ; a treach'rous Friend.
 Shock'd with her Lewdness, *Virtue* blush'd Reproof,
 And Foe to Lies, would shame her into Truth :
 But her hard Heart's impervious to Remorse ;
 Nor won by Kindness, nor restrain'd by Force.
 When will these Vices, say, this *False Taste* cease ?
 Learn, learn that noblest Taste, the Taste to please !
 Hold no lewd Orgyes ! mind thy Task at home,
 There guide the Spindle, and direct the Loom ;
 Reclaim the Rebel Hairs into their Place,
 And form each Ringlet with a proper Grace ;
 To no Ill-nature be thy Thoughts inclin'd ;
 Let no gross Lewdness e'er debase thy Mind !
Good Nature wins the Heart, new-points each Grace,
 And adds fresh Fairness to the fairest Face ;
 While Lewdness gives to Beauty our Distaste,
 And Nature, cloy'd, will sicken at the Feast.
 Be *Reason*, with her equal Scales, thy Guide,
Virtue thy Passion, *Decency* thy Pride !
 A Taste like this, makes Bliss and Fame your own
 A Taste like this gave *France* a MAINTENON.

When C---mm-rce sicken'd under *W-----*'s Reign,
 And thy lov'd *B-----n* bled in every Vein,
 What *Virtue* kindled within *Marcus*' Breast,
 Where all the *Roman* Patriot seem'd confest ?
 What powerful Accents trickled from his Tongue,
 Smooth as the *Tiber*, as the *Danube* strong,
 While *Truth* and *Spirit*, with united Force,
 Stemm'd the strong Torrent of *Corruption*'s Course.
Corruption, creeping Serpent, whose mean Sway,
 Bore Honour, Right, and Liberty away :
 Enraptur'd Senates own'd his mighty Nod,

That *Marcus* who should, to be truly great,
 Have rescu'd B----n from impending Fate,
 Lur'd by *False Taste*, by *mad Ambition* sway'd,
 His C---t---y, which he might have sav'd, b--tr--d,
 Now *poorly Rich* her hapless Fate survives,
 And rather *bears to breathe*, than truly lives,
Ignobly Noble, impotently great,
 The Scorn of Pow'r, a Cypher in the State,
 Careless of Parts, his Country's not his own,
 And slumb'ring on a Bench with Scandal won.

What is NOBILITY? 'Tis not ESTATE,
 Or *Birth*, or *Title*, which can make you *Great*;
 For if from Ancestors those Honours flow,
 They are but Honours you to *others* owe:
 Or if those Favours you from C----'s receive
 To sink the freeborn B----n in the slave;
 Enflam'd with Lust of Title or of Pow'r,
 Or lull'd by *Flattery's* Opiate, *Free* no more:
 Honours, thus purchas'd, but reflect Disgrace,
 And cloud the beaming Glories of thy Race.
 Tho', like a *Comet*, you all-gay appear,
 And Slaves by Dozens load the gilded Car,
 'Tho' *Fortune* flatter thee with all her Store,
 The Plume of Title, and the Pomp of Pow'r,
 On *Virtue*, *Virtue* only, you must rise;
 No *real Greatness* but in *Virtue* lies.

You ask, where is this *Greatness*? Not in C---s,
 Where Honour sleeps, and dire *Corruption* sports.
 Yet in thy C---st---d her Charms engage,
 The Ornament and Pattern of the Age,
 Whom *Sense*, *Wit*, *Elegance*, united form,
 And all the Social and like *Virtues* warm.

Whose Tongue a *Cato's* Principles inspire,
 A *Tully's* Eloquence, a *Brutus' Fire* ;
 Equal to shine in *Freedom's* sacred Cause,
 Or serve a *Patriot K---*, who rules by *Laws*,
 With honest Heart, and clear collected Mind,
Reason his Pilot, *Patriotism* his *Wind* ;
 To *steer* betwixt (too conscious of their Springs)
 Licentious *C---ns* and encroaching----
 That *Scylla* and *Charibdis* of a State ;
Rocks which some *shifting* Statesmen knew too late.
 Unhappy * *Ireland*, whose propitious Star
 Awakes our Jealousy, alarms our Fear,
 Oh ! had the *M--n--ry* prolong'd his Charge,
 Free as his Soul, and as his Genius large,
 How would his Plan have rais'd thy drooping Head,
 Nourish'd thy Arts, and rear'd thy Infant Trade ?
 In *all* his *Country's* Friend-----Great PATRIOT HE,
 Who knows no Foes, but Foes to *Liberty*.

How *blest* that *State* where *K---g's* and People's Voice,
 Unite in one disinterested Choice ?
 How *great* that *Senate* who make Right their End,
 Whom King and People own their equal Friend ?
 How *Godlike* is that *King* who rules by *Laws*,
 And from fair *Virtue* only seeks Applause,
 Whose innate *Grandeur* speaks a Royal Mind
 To *Merit*, *Truth*, and *Liberty* inclin'd,
 Sublimely graceful, and serenely great,
 King of his People's *Hearts*, the *noblest* State !

True *Public* Spirit no mean End pursues,
 Expands the Mind, and elevates its Views,

Pants to serve *Virtue's* Friends, no *Statesman's* Fool,
Freedom and *Truth*, the Impulse of his Soul,
 And leaves, like B--ckf--d, to *Corruption's* Flies,
 To *Janus*, by Birth *Patriot*, *Slave* by Choice,
 All grov'ling, selfish, solitary Joys :
Champion for *Liberty*, sworn *Foe* to *Place*,
 With Strength he reason'd, and he spoke with Grace,
 While Elegance of Language, Force of Sense,
 Display'd the powerful Charms of Eloquence ;
 'Till dire *Corruption* whisper'd in his Ear :
 " Rise, rise, my fav'rite Son ! your *Price* I bear !"
 His *Public Patriot* Principles soon seem
 The mimic Visions of some fleeting Dream :
 Often the Mask in which his Vice was drest,
 And all the shameless Tr--m--r stood confest.
 A *Standing Army* grew a *Standing Joke*,
 And *Pensions* *Virtue's* Mark, not *Slav'ry's* Yoke.
 Such, such his Taste !

So when thy Sons, O *Rome*,
 Had by their Valour the whole World o'ercome,
 Their Liberties once lost, their Virtue sold,
 The World's great Conqu'rors sunk in Slaves of Gold.

Is then *False Taste* (you say) to C----s confin'd ?
 Are there no Marks of this *degenerate* Mind,
 Among the lower Classes of Mankind ?
 Yes !---But from C----ts Fashions and Manners flow ;
 To C---s, the Fountain, good or bad, we owe.
 Do C---ts trade ? And must the Soldiers p--y
 Ring to the Call of Mistresses of Play ?
 Would C---s discountenance or not connive,
 Kn--s would turn honest, the starv'd Soldier live.
 Do C---s Oeconomy or Waste pursue ?

Example, living Law, whose Breath inspires
Vice with new Force, or fans fair *Virtue's* Fires,
 Exalts the reas'ning Man into the God,
 Or sinks him--Brute in Error's dark Abode ;
 For when fair *Virtue* stagnates in the Brain,
 And foul *Corruption* clouds the reas'ning Vein,
 Where *False Taste* wraps us to the flow'ry Plain,
 Where *Syren Pleasure* sings, nor sings in vain,
Man is not Man, such Dictates are the Voice
 Of ruling *Instinct*, not of *Reason's* Choice,
 Till active *Virtue* circ'lates in the Mind,
 And gives it's reas'ning Streams to flow refin'd ;
 Refin'd, as in that Scene where *Wit* is *Sense*,
 Where *Art* is *Nature*, *Grandeur* *Innocence* ;
Politeness is *Sincerity* of Life,
 Which knows no Hope nor Fear, Deceit or Strife ;
 That *Rural Scene* to which *True Taste* resorts,
 Far from the *Farce* of *Pomp*, the *Guilt* of ---

Virtue like this, gave *Rome's* fam'd Glory Birth,
 The Seat of Arts, the Mistress of the Earth ;
 Fair Tides of Grandeur *Tiber's* Channel's swell'd,
 For *Liberty* the Helm of Empire held ;
 Till LUXURY with slow but sure Deceit,
 That Bane of *Freedom*, Ruin of a State,
 Did her best Sons from *Virtue's* Paths entice,
 Unnerv'd their Minds, and soften'd them by *Vice* :
 Then POVERTY, EXTRAVAGANCE's Heir,
 Begot DEPENDANCE, foul CORRUPTION's Sire ;
 CORRUPTION dire ! whose Bark *Rome's* Fools conveys
 Thro' *Slavery's* Voyage, with a foul Lust for Place :
Rome ! whose Ambition now is sunk so low,
 It lies in *Fiddling*, *Singing*, *Farce*, and *Show*.

Whose *floating Castles* rule the subject Main,
 And by their *Flag* the *ballanc'd World* sustain.
 How would ELIZA, now our *Taste* admire,
 Could she but see us *ballance Straws on Wire*?

Since then in *C---s* we seek *True Taste* in vain,
 Since *Virtue* makes the Manners and the Man,
 View we *Philemon* in yon rural Seat,
 Supremely blest, and innocently great!
 Gentle his Manners; *English* is his Meat;
 His Dress no *French Brocade*, but plain, yet neat:
 The Poor share with him what his Fortune gave,
 And nothing wanting, nothing does he crave;
 No sensual Pleasures cheat him with a Name,
 No Scandal blasts Life's sweetest Breath, his Fame;
 No Envy racks, no Scandal swells his Breast,
 Where *Virtue's* Image is the only Guest.
 While others of their cruel Stars complain,
 He views the Labours of the distant Main;
 And smiles at the uncertain Tides of Fate,
 Secure on Shore, within his calm Retreat;
 Where cool *Reflection* spreads her peaceful Wings,
 And pitting *Innocence* looks down on ---
 Pleas'd, or in letter'd Solitude to enjoy
 The leisure Minutes of each well-spent Day;
 Or by Tuition form his Childrens Will,
 Point it to Goodness, or reform from Ill;
 By fair Examples and persuasive Art,
 Pour the free Streams of *Virtue* in the Heart.
 And when the Sun descends with feeble Ray,
 And falling Dews lament the fallen Day,
 He lies on Mattrafs, not on Beds of Down,
 Yet blest with Sleep to guilty *C---s* unknown.

“ *Retire ! love Truth ! adore the ONE GREAT GOD !*
 “ *Studious to tread these Paths your Parents trod !*”
 When thus his Days are all in Silence past,
 “ *THY WILL BE DONE, O GOD !*” shall be his last.

Come G---n, thou to me for ever dear,
 Pride of my Verse, and Softner of my Care,
 Whose Mind, *thy own*, with honest Scorn can hate
A Fool with Title, or a Knave in State,
 Whose Friendship honours, and whose Virtues charm,
 Frank with just Pride, with gen'rous Passion warm,
 Genteel with Dignity, in Taste refin'd,
 In every Thought sincere, in Pain resign'd !
 Tell me, may my Ambitious Views pretend
 Thou art my old Acquaintance and my Friend ?
 Say that thou prun'st her too luxuriant Vine,
 Cut the superfluous Branches from each Line,
 And taught her docile Genius where to twine ;
 That, steer'd by *Thee*, my Bark from Rocks safe sail'd,
 On which blind Pilots, driven by Folly, fail'd ;
Thee, by the *Good* ador'd, the *Bad* approv'd,
 By all, who TRUTH and VIRTUE love, belov'd.

F I N I S.